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UNCLAS ROME 000280

SIPDIS

USDA FOR DHEGWOOD, FAS - BRICHEY LREICH AND RHUGHES
STATE FOR OES/ETC - NEUMANN, EB/TPP/BTT - MALAC
AND IO/EDA - KOTOK
USAID FOR EGAT/ESP - MOORE AND BERTRAM
AND ARS - BRETTING AND BLALOCK

FROM US MISSION TO THE UN AGENCIES FOR FOOD & AGRICULTURE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [SENV](#) [KIPR](#) [AORC](#) [FAO](#)

SUBJECT: PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES: TREATY COULD ENTER
INTO FORCE BY JUNE 2004; MATERIAL TRANSFER MEETING MAY
SLIP UNTIL NOVEMBER 2004

REF: (A) 03 ROME 2210, (B) 03 ROME 5197
(C) 03 STATE 301407

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO THE FAO SECRETARIAT, AS OF 26 JANUARY SOME 34-35 COUNTRIES HAD SUBMITTED RATIFICATION INSTRUMENTS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY (IT) FOR PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE. THE EC IS EXPECTED TO DO SO IN MID MARCH 2004, CONCURRENTLY WITH AT LEAST A HANDFUL OF EU MEMBER STATES, THUS RAISING THE NUMBER OF RATIFICATIONS OVER THE THRESHOLD OF 40 AND LIKELY TRIGGERING ENTRY INTO FORCE BY MID JUNE 2004. MEANWHILE, FAO STILL LACKS SUFFICIENT FUNDING TO HOLD A MEETING TO NEGOTIATE A STANDARD MATERIAL TRANSFER AGREEMENT AND TWO OTHER IT-RELATED PREPARATORY MEETINGS. IF FUNDS ARE NOT FORTHCOMING IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, THE DATE OF THE MTA MEETING COULD SLIP FROM JULY TO NOVEMBER 2004. THESE DEVELOPMENTS SUGGEST THAT THE IT WILL LIKELY ENTER INTO FORCE WITH KEY MTA QUESTIONS UNRESOLVED AND THE US MARGINALIZED AS AN OBSERVER IN THE INITIAL DELIBERATIONS OF THE IT GOVERNING BODY. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JANUARY 26, ALTERNATE PERMREP DISCUSSED PROGRESS ON THE IT AND MTA WITH CLIVE STANNARD, SENIOR LIAISON OFFICER FOR THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE.

3. ACCORDING TO STANNARD, 34 OR 35 COUNTRIES HAVE ALREADY SUBMITTED THEIR IT INSTRUMENTS OF RATIFICATION. HE SAID FAO HAD LEARNED THAT THE EC IS PLANNING TO SUBMIT RATIFICATION INSTRUMENTS O/A MARCH 12, AND THAT OTHER EU MEMBER STATES THAT ARE IN A POSITION TO DO WILL SUBMIT THEIR INSTRUMENTS CONCURRENTLY. ACTION BY THE EUROPEANS WILL TAKE THE NUMBER OF RATIFICATIONS ABOVE THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF RATIFICATIONS (40), THEREBY TRIGGERING ENTRY INTO FORCE 90 DAYS THEREAFTER.

4. REGARDING THE MTA EXPERTS MEETING, STANNARD SAID FAO STILL LACKS THE NECESSARY DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO HOLD THE INTENDED IT-RELATED MEETINGS. AT THIS POINT, THERE IS ONLY ENOUGH MONEY FOR THE INTERIM COMMITTEE SESSION IN NOVEMBER. THE MTA MEETING AND WORKING GROUP ON COMPLIANCE ISSUES MAY HAVE TO BE DEFERRED FROM JULY UNTIL NOVEMBER IF THE FUNDING QUESTION IS NOT RESOLVED IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. FAO OFFICIALS HAVE TALKED RECENTLY TO IRELAND, THE UK AND THE NETHERLANDS, AND ARE ENCOURAGING DONORS TO COORDINATE AMONGST THEMSELVES TO ASSURE THE NECESSARY FUNDS. THE SHORTFALL IS ATTRIBUTABLE IN PART TO THE CHANGED FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF JAPAN (THE LARGEST DONOR TO EARLIER IT NEGOTIATIONS) AND TO A NEW TENDENCY AMONG SOME EUROPEAN DONORS TO MAKE BLOCK GRANTS TO FAO PROGRAMMING (WHICH ARE THEN SPREAD OVER VARIOUS FAO ACTIVITIES) INSTEAD OF EARMARKED VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIFIC PROGRAMS SUCH AS THE IT.

5. COMMENT: IT NOW APPEARS THAT -- NOTWITHSTANDING USG EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE OTHER DONORS (REF B) AND OUR OWN CONTRIBUTION OF \$50,000 -- THE DATE OF THE MTA MEETING (ORIGINALLY ENVISIONED FOR OCTOBER 2003) MAY NOW SLIP UNTIL NOVEMBER 2004. THIS SUGGESTS THAT WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RELY ON THE MTA PROCESS, WHICH WILL LIKELY START LATE AND STRETCH OUT OVER CONSIDERABLE TIME, TO SAFEGUARD KEY USG INTERESTS AS THE IT ENTERS INTO FORCE. WE MAY NEED TO FOCUS MORE ON ENSURING THAT OBSERVERS SUCH AS OURSELVES HAVE A SPACE TO PARTICIPATE SUBSTANTIVELY IN THE INTERIM COMMITTEE.

CLEVERLEY

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2004ROME00280 - Classification: UNCLASSIFIED